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tion of the seal industry. We can not believe that Great Britain, if rightly approached in the matter, will insist on such a rigid observance of the Paris decision as will inevitably, in the course of a few years, banish seal-skins from her market. Two Governments which have already gone so far in the attempt to reach a peaceful and satisfactory solution of the difficulty, are pledged by their past action to go still further, if necessary. That they will both of them do so, fairly and honestly, we have not the slightest reason to doubt.

In any event, the Behring Sea Arbitration has not been a failure. The whole seal herd had better perish, ten times over, than that the two countries should have a single week of actual war. This from the economic standpoint alone. From the higher standpoint of morals and religion no comparison can be made. The world would not seriously suffer from the total destruction of the sealskin industry. A war between the United States and Great Britain, at this late day, would be an unspeakable crime, from which every nation on the face of the globe would suffer incalculably, both economically and morally.

THE QUESTION OF ALSACE-LORRAINE.

The Editor of *La Conférence Interparlementaire*, Dr. Gobat, comments as follows on the circular issued by the Universal Peace Union of Philadelphia containing the request of "Pan-Aryan" in the *Review of Reviews* to the German emperor to give back the French-speaking part of Alsace-Lorraine to France:

"Certainly, this request is the manifestation of a good disposition. It springs from the incontestably right idea that the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany is the cause of the present distress and social peril of the nations, that this unjust, imprudent, inconsiderate act is leading all Europe on to a bloody revolution.

"But the question being put in the form in which the American circular gives it, we see at once a lot of interrogation points. Does there exist a sovereign with a heart sufficiently great, noble and strong as to give up voluntarily an unjust acquisition? Does the nation vanquished in 1870 itself possess sufficient greatness of soul to see in the giving back of the annexed provinces anything but an act of weakness and pusillanimity? Finally, if Metz should become French, and Strassburg and Mulhouse German, would that settle the Alsace-Lorraine difficulty?

"Frankly, we ask time for reflection before answering any of these questions in the affirmative. Chauvinism is more intense to-day than ever.

"In our opinion, peace and security will reign on our continent when Alsace and Lorraine, which have been for centuries the battlefield of Europe, and which France, on three different occasions, has not been able to preserve from invasion, shall be neither German nor French; not before. The population of this territory does not itself certainly desire any other solution."

The creation of an independent state out of this territory, as here suggested by Dr. Gobat, would probably

settle the conflict forever. But how is this to be brought about? The "*chauvinisme vivace*" of which he speaks would not very readily consent to such a thing just now. A great change of spirit would have to come to both Germany and France before such a surrender of long-claimed rights would be possible. The thing which is most natural and in harmony with the spirit of our age would be for the two countries to turn over the whole question to the people of the provinces themselves and let them say what they wish to do with themselves. They have been kicked and bandied about long enough by the great powers. The sense of justice alone ought to lead both Germany and France to turn over their future destinies to themselves. But one might put a good many interrogation points to this proposition also.

The only thing that can be done now is for the friends of peace in these two great nations and in all other nations to go on inculcating the doctrines of justice and of peace and goodwill until a new idea of patriotism shall prevail and the old chauvinism shall disappear. Among the means of bringing about this new spirit is the presentation, by the friends of peace, to both nations, from time to time, of every possible solution of the question of these disturbing provinces. We do not expect any immediate results from such propositions as that contained in the *Review of Reviews*, but the duty of making them is not on that account the less. Every means of influence should be used, and used often, which will hasten the solution of a question whose existence is a source of so much peril to all the best interests of Europe and the world.

Since writing the above, we have found in *Les Etats-Unis d'Europe*, the following discussion of the proposition made by the anonymous writer in the *Review of Reviews*. Madame Jeanne Rival who writes it is an Alsatian and has made a special study of the subject:

"The delimitation given in the map which accompanies the *résumé* of which we have given an extract is absolutely arbitrary and erroneous. In reality, *German and French* are spoken every where in Alsace-Lorraine. The annexed provinces, now French, now German, present a mixture of the manners, customs and language of the two neighboring countries which have possessed them in turn.

"The demarcation to be made between these two opposite influences does not depend upon geographical lines but rather upon the classes of the population. The well-to-do bourgeoisie, those having property to rent, the traders and the large manufacturers use French in their daily life, as well at Strassburg, Colmar and particularly Mulhouse, as at Metz; while the working classes of the people and the peasants use by preference and almost entirely the Alsatian dialect. *Nowhere* do the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine use among themselves the true German, which remains the official language, imposed by force—and received with bad grace.

"It is important to understand thoroughly this fact that the dialect of the country which varies from locality to locality, if it contains German roots, does not much re-

semble good German. The immigrants from the Empire have considerable difficulty in understanding it. Furthermore, French words, more or less corrupted, are numerous in it, and this language of the people furnishes, to any one who will take pains to study it, a faithful reflection of the changing destinies of Alsace which has taken something from each of its successive possessors.

"All those who have actually seen the real condition of the annexed provinces can not fail, we think, to agree with us on these points. Hence, they will be compelled to recognize that the solution advanced by the anonymous Prussian author of the article cited, animated though he be, as we are happy to recognize, by the best and most praiseworthy intentions, is fundamentally wrong. And we think that, in spite of his effort to be impartial, for which he ought to have due credit, he is astray in saying to Emperor William: 'You can convert the German-speaking inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine from adversaries into fervent German patriots.' The reason is, we repeat, that if they speak German, it is against their will, because they are forced to do it, and because they consider it always a foreign language imposed by law. Their mother tongue is, according to their class, either French or the local patois.

"Furthermore, as was recognized by the Chicago Peace Congress and as the living example of Switzerland proves, it is not alone on the basis of language that the nationality of populations rests, and especially in the case under consideration it is not on that ground that a definite solution can be found. Regard must be had to the sentiments which have uniformly been expressed by the annexed people themselves, and to the right which all peoples have of freely disposing of themselves.

"The plebiscitum, the personal vote of the native inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine is the only practicable, the only possible solution, and since this would in the nature of the case bring about a general peace, we may add that it alone is in harmony with the maxim which is always true: 'If you wish peace, establish liberty and justice.'"

A NATIONAL BOARD OF CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION.

Two important bills have been brought forward in the present Congress for the creation of a National Board of Arbitration. One of these was prepared by Hon. Carroll D. Wright, Commissioner of Labor, the other by Attorney-General Olney. The former bill was introduced on December 18th, the latter on January 17th. The former provides for the creation of a Commission to be known as the United States Board of Conciliation and Arbitration, composed of five Commissioners, appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, not more than three of whom shall be chosen from the same political party, and no one of whom shall hold any pecuniary relation whatever to any common carrier or employer.

The other bill provides that in case of any serious controversy between a common carrier and the employees of such carrier the Chairman of the Inter-State Commerce Commission and the Commissioner of Labor, acting as a

board of mediation and conciliation, shall make an effort with all practicable expedition to settle such controversy. If this effort shall fail, the bill provides that they shall then endeavor to have the controversy submitted to the arbitration of a board of three persons, of whom the Chairman of the Inter-State Commerce Commission shall be one, and the other two of whom shall be chosen, one by the carrier or employer directly interested, the other by the labor organization or organizations, to which the employees directly interested belong.

The first bill gives the Commission of five authority to inquire into the terms and conditions of employment of all employees subject to the provisions of the bill, to summon witnesses and procure all available documentary evidence, and to invoke the aid of the United States courts if necessary. It provides that in case of a strike, lockout, or boycott, actually declared or threatened, between those subject to the provisions of the act, the Commission shall try at once to bring about an amicable settlement by mediation and conciliation. It is also authorized to investigate any complaint made to it by any employee or corporation or association of employees, or forwarded to it by any commissioner of labor, or board of conciliation and arbitration in any State or Territory, and to make a report in writing of such investigation, which shall afterwards be prima facie evidence in case of judicial proceedings. If mediation and conciliation fail, all differences and controversies investigated may then be submitted in writing to the Commission for arbitration, the decision to be final and conclusive, any Circuit Court of the United States being given power to enforce the same. In case either party to the arbitration is dissatisfied with the decision, the said party may apply to any Circuit Court of the United States, which shall sit as a Court of Equity and determine the case in such way as to do justice in the premises. During the pendency of the arbitration, employees may not be discharged except for inefficiency, nor may they engage in or aid strikes and boycotts against their employers. Employees of railroads which are in the hands of receivers appointed by Federal Courts may be heard through representatives of their associations in such courts as to the terms and conditions of their employment. Employers may not discriminate against any employee because of his membership in any labor organization.

The further provisions of the second bill are much the same as these of the first, except that an appeal to a Circuit Court of the United States may be made only for matter of law apparent on the record. In this bill the writing which submits a case for arbitration must be acknowledged by the parties before a notary public, and there can be no second arbitration on the same matter until two years have passed. Both bills provide that the articles of incorporation of any organization must make it a disownable offence for any member to participate in